

A Tiny Country in the Caribbean Is Making Millions Off Its Old Domain Name

Anguilla is a small Caribbean island with a population of less than 20,000. It's also making millions off the tech industry.

Last week, the BBC reported that Dharmesh Shah, the cofounder and CTO of HubSpot, paid the country \$700,000 earlier this year to buy the web address you.ai for a new company. So how did a British Overseas Territory that's only 16 miles long and at its widest, 3.5 miles, become the king of AI domains? Anguilla gained .ai in the 1990s, when the Internet was in its infancy and countries acquired domain names, mostly at no cost, such as .us for the United States or .uk for the United Kingdom, to launch their websites.

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Then, when ChatGPT launched in late 2022 and the new AI age began, companies from Google to Grok started buying up the .ai domains. Business Insider reports that there are now more than 850,000 .ai domains online. In 2020, there were fewer than 50,000.

The AP reports that Anguilla earned around \$38 million from selling domain names in 2024, up from \$32 million in 2023, almost a quarter (23%) of its total revenue for the year. Tourism is still its No. 1 moneymaker at 37%, per the International Monetary Fund.

"Some people call it a windfall", Anguilla's former premier,

Ellis Webster, told The New York Times last year. “We just call it God smiling down on us.”

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